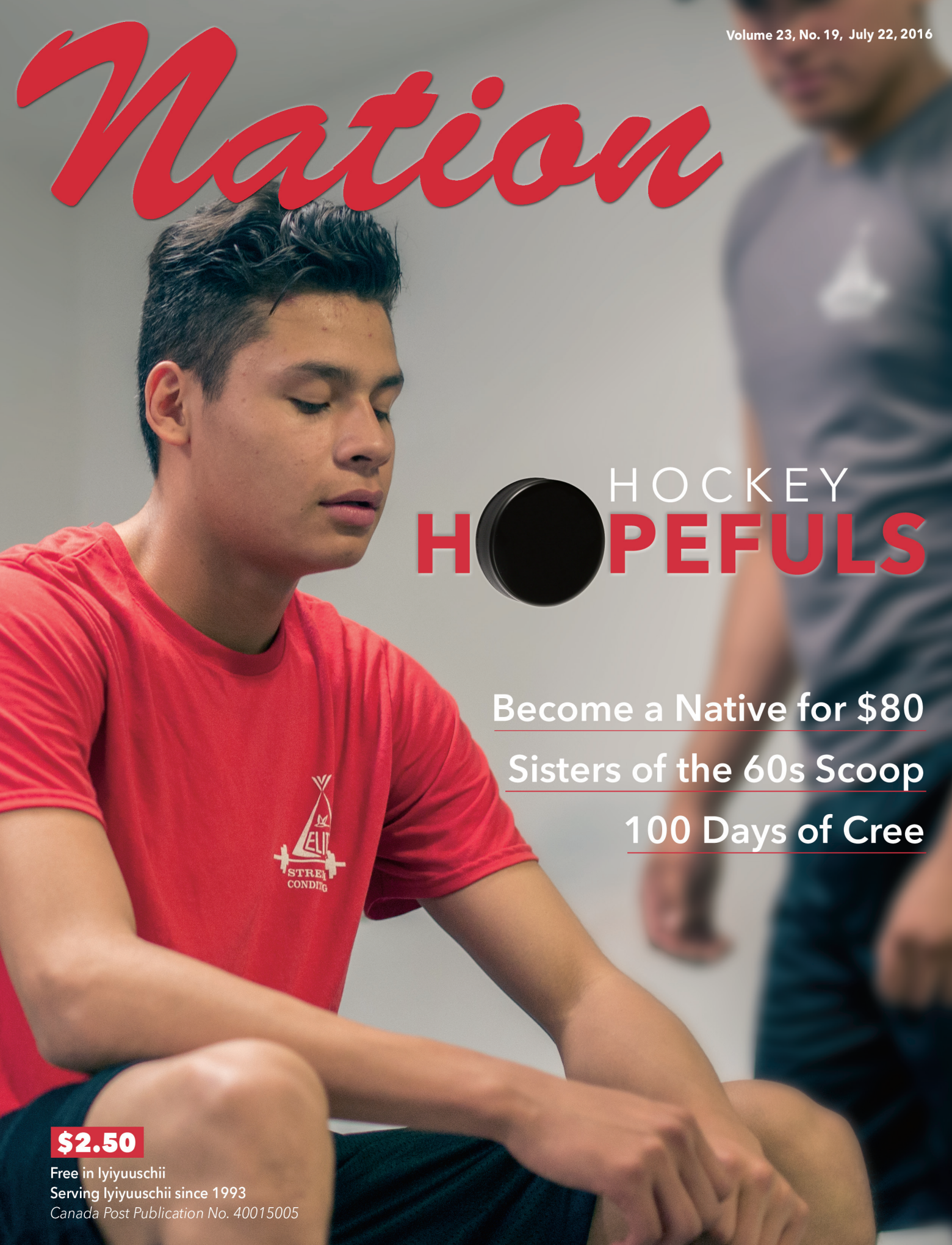
Volume 23, No. 19, July 22, 2016

# Nation



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**ᐅᐦᐱᐦᐅᐃᔨᒪ 2, 3 & 4, 2016**

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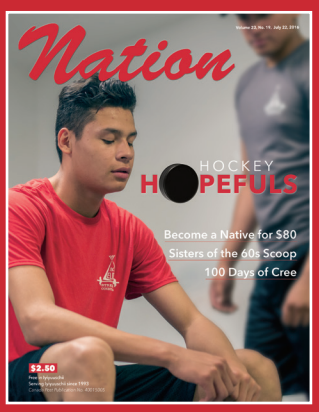


Photo of Linden Namagoose
Photo by Catherine Orr

Editorial

# The $80 Indian

by Lyle Stewart

Like many non-Natives in North America, I can point to at least one First Nations ancestor. My great-grandfather, Charles Augustus Fry (pictured here at his wedding with Edna Eaton), emigrated from Oklahoma to Western Canada in the late 1890s. He was the son of a white Pony Express rider and a Native woman, whose specific ancestry is lost in the family lore.

That fact does not make me a First Nations person. I grew up in mainstream communities, benefited from the superior funding for schools, sports, health and culture that is directed at non-Natives, and was never discriminated against because of the colour of my skin or the way I spoke.

Once in a while, someone in our family would half joke that we should be eligible for certain social supports for Canadians who have Indian Status. Those supports became available only in the last few decades, but in no way compensate for the centuries of dispossession, racism and cultural genocide that First Nations communities in Canada have experienced.

The subtext of that statement, however, is that genetics or belonging to a specific community shouldn't help one obtain social advantages denied to others. But that view denies the vast wealth that settler populations have appropriated from Canada's Aboriginal peoples – *because they belonged to a specific group*.

This issue came to light with the oddball attempt by a Quebec group to claim Indian Status. The so-called Mikinaks say they should also have a right to tax exemptions and to exercise Aboriginal hunting, fishing, trapping, and trade rights.

As self-appointed chief of the Mikinaks, Beaurharnois resident Lise Brisebois sells membership in the "tribe" for $80 to anyone who can point to at least one Aboriginal ancestor at some point in the past. More than 400 have already paid up.

I guess I'm eligible. So is almost everyone else in Quebec. Researchers have found that between half and three-quarters of all Quebecers have at least one Aboriginal ancestor. But that doesn't mean there are four to six million Aboriginals in Quebec.

To my ears, it's an eerie echo of the "All Lives Matter" controversy. Those who deny that black people in the United States and Canada face special abuse from police forces will use the phrase to counter the Black Lives Matter movement. It's a way to drown the legitimate complaints of an oppressed group.

Nonetheless, I think we should be honest about where we came from, and the difficulties or advantages our ancestral past has given us today. When my grandmother was growing up, she learned to hide her Aboriginal heritage because of the prevailing racism.

However, my mother always pointed out to me the abuse that Native people faced where I grew up in Alberta and British Columbia. Her teachings helped inform my work as a journalist and as someone who believes in social justice.

So yes, I am proud to have a little Aboriginal heritage. I also recognize the advantages I had growing up as a non-Native. Here's another advantage: I just saved myself 80 bucks.

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News

# Flying the healthy skies

## Inaugural **Chibougamau medical charter** takes to the air

by Dan Isaac

The first flight of the Inland Patient Charter Service took off July 11 from Chibougamau airport. The charter service will fly five times a week to Val-d'Or and Montreal, and is geared towards easing and increasing accessibility to health services for community members of Mistissini, Oujé-Bougoumou and Waswanipi.

The service comes after a cooperative agreement reached by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay and Air Creebec. It's the second medical charter route and there's talk of a third that would effectively link the entire James Bay area to health services in Val-d'Or and Montreal.

Before the charter was created, something as simple as a dentist appointment was an excruciatingly long commute by bus. It was a reality that Sebastian Isik, one of the charter's inaugural passengers, knows too well. "The trip used to take me six hours by bus," said Isik. "Fifty-five minutes? Here we go! Glad I chose to take the plane today."

"We know that reducing stress helps, so it's important to have services like this, especially for patients with high anxiety cases, oncology, hemodialysis, surgery and renal care," explained Kathy Shecapio, Director of Cree Patient Services.

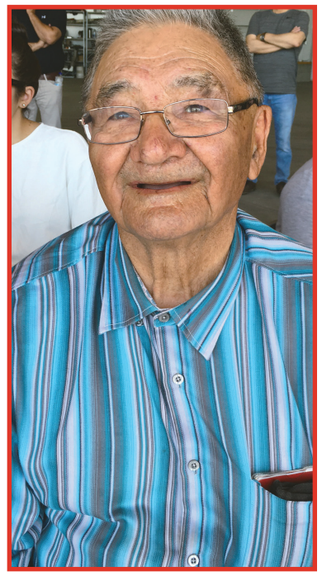
Even those eligible for flights were subject to standby and wait times, noted Nancy Shecapio-Blacksmith, the onboard nurse for the inaugural flight. "When you're sick and in need of care, that's unacceptable," she said.

The flights include a gurney for immobile patients and emergency medical equipment. Indigenous people, especially ones living in isolated communities, face a myriad of barriers in accessing medical services, distance being just one of them. At least two of the onboard nurses will be fluent in Cree and it's already making a difference.

"The Cree patients, especially the Elders, were very comfortable because they were able to express themselves and ask questions in Cree," said Shecapio-Blacksmith. "This service is bridging the gap in making health care equitable for First Nations living in James Bay."

The inaugural flight followed a signing ceremony by St-Amour and Air Creebec's Tanya Pash. "This is a prime example of how our Cree organizations, by working together, can succeed in improving life for the entire Cree Nation," said Pash.

As the patients were walked onto the tarmac to board the flight, Elder Matthew Wapachee blessed the plane and its passengers. The spectrum of people served by this service runs from checkups to surgery to chemotherapy, and as the tearful goodbyes commenced it was easy to see that this service isn't just for patients, it's for their families too.



Elder Matthew Wapachee offered a blessing at the ceremony

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# Quebec announces **cultural agreement** in Oujé-Bougoumou

# **Consulting** the Cree

by Dan Isaac

Quebec Culture Minister Luc Fortin visited the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute in Oujé-Bougoumou June 26 to announce a three-year cultural development agreement between the provincial government and the Cree Nation.

The announcement marks the "first time Quebec has done a public consultation within a Cree community," said Abel Bosum, who presented cultural recommendations to the ministry during the meeting. "Quebec's cultural policy hasn't been amended for over 25 years, and including First Nations at the start of this process is good way to build a better relationship."

The agreement signed in Oujé-Bougoumou includes a $1.1-million investment over three years to "protect and promote the culture of the Cree Nation and support the preservation of traditions and art heritage elements," said Fortin.

While the ACCI will benefit from additional funding, the investment will be distributed throughout the community's public entities. "Cree culture is embedded in everything we do – health, education, governance," said Bosum.

Experience has shown the Cree government that the success of strategic planning depends on funding certainty and multi-tiered commitment. "We want to negotiate multi-year agreements. This approach would guarantee long-term plans, designed by the Cree, and the resources to carry them out," insisted Bosum.

In addition to creating a better relationship with First Nations communities, Quebec's new policy is aimed at a cultural identity that includes Canada's three founding nations – Aboriginal, French and British. But Bosum remains guarded about how much change will be affected.

"Time will tell. It's a question of what kind of financial resources are allocated, and also the venues that will be used to promote Indigenous culture and language," he said. "If the provincial and federal governments could create a cultural policy that embraced all of the three founding nations of Canada, that would encourage Indigenous people to feel more part of their province and Canada."

Top Right: CNG negotiator Abel Bosum gives Quebec Culture Minister Luc Fortin a tour of the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute;

Bottom Right: Cultural funding could support more initiatives like last month's N'we Jinan Festival, which involved many youth in an artistic experience.

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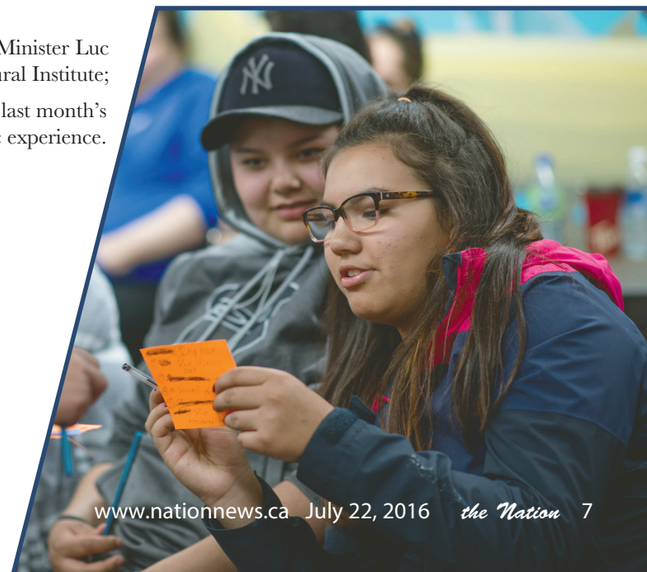

# CONGRATULATIONS 2015-2016 GRADUATES

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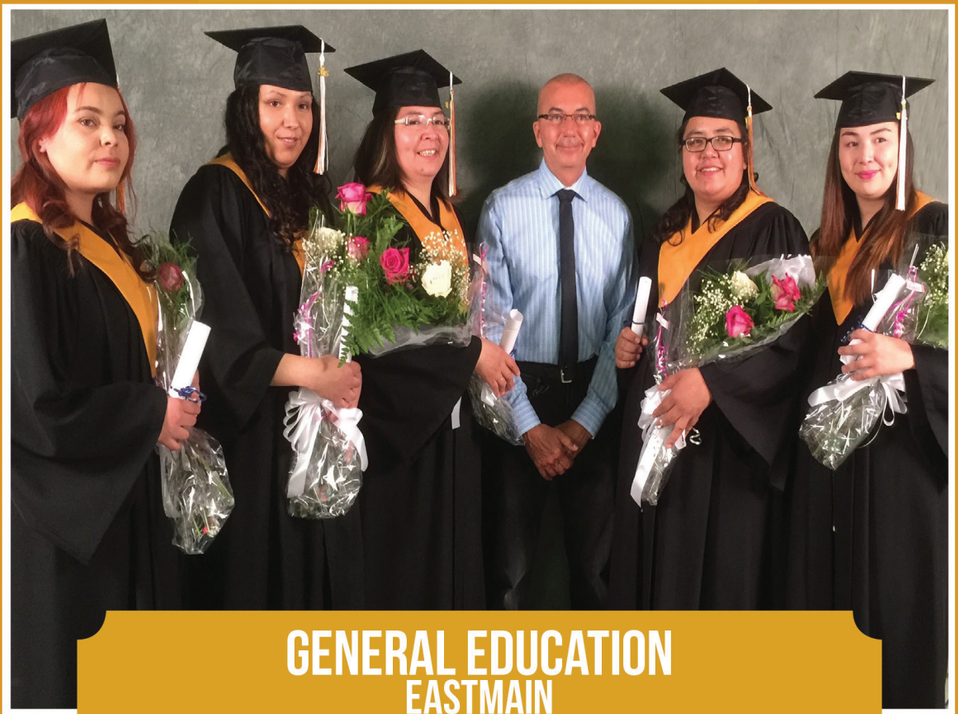

## GENERAL EDUCATION
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**Absent**: Curtis Mark-Stewart, Stéphane Shanoush-Ratt,
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Picture by Anna Lesco

## ALL THE BEST FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD!

In Brief

The Kahnawake Powwow continued despite wet weather

## The powow must go on

by Dan Isaac

"The show must go on." The phrase is attributed to 19th century circus performers but Indigenous people must often have uttered words to that effect, because neither sleet nor snow is able to stop a good powwow.

That was true during a couple dreary, cold days at the Kahnawake Powwow grounds. Rain kept the crowd small and the main stage was largely empty for the most part, save for a women and a young girl mimicking her steps.

To the audience's credit, they made the best of a muddy situation. One woman spent most of her day dancing a jig beside the drumming tent. "I'm soaked and muddy but I'm still here," Sedalia Kawennotas said as she walked by in soggy moccasins.

The competition was fierce despite the conditions. Warren Papatie, an Algonquin Grass Dancer, noted that every dancer has a relationship to the sound of the drum. "When you're out there, you're not trying to beat anyone. You're trying to beat that drum," said Papatie. "You're listening to the story that drum is telling you, and whoever tells the story best, they're the winner."

For every dancer there are 10 unsung heroes: the staff, the volunteers, the vendors and the artisans who put on a brave face. They all put on a beautiful exhibition of culture and resilience.

## Language, education dominate Youth AGA

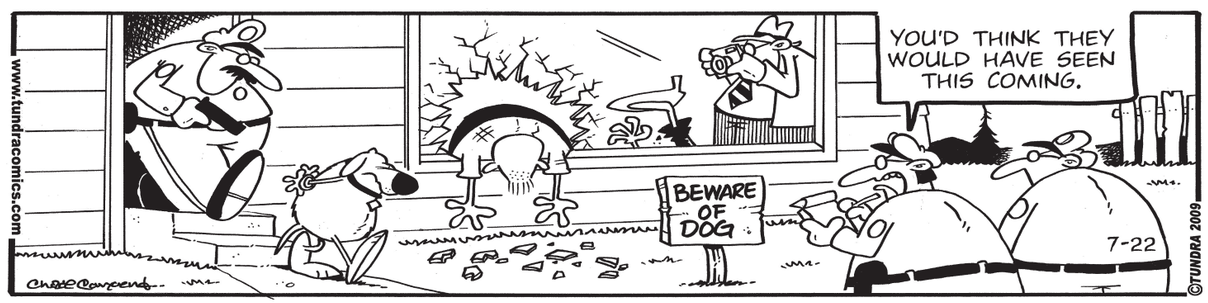
by Orlando Blacksmith

Reinforcing the Cree language topped the issues addressed at the Cree Nation Youth Council's annual general assembly June 28-30 in Eastmain. Education, substance abuse and health rounded out the priorities voted on by delegates.

Another big topic was the micro-grant opportunities fund. With the support of the Department of Commerce and Industry (DCI), the CNYC announced a new program to help young Cree entrepreneurs launch their projects with grants up to $5000. The fund will build skills in a hands-on approach to starting a business.

Among the youth delegates was 17-year-old Lyle Kitchen, the interim director of the Nemaska Youth Council. Kitchen made a presentation on drug and alcohol abuse, noting that many workshops have low attendance and participation from the youth. He said youth need to be encouraged to finish high school and reduce the consumption of alcohol and drugs.

"Finish high school and help build our nation to greatness," Kitchen said. "We Cree have a small population and we are going to need every brick available to us so that we can build our future."



Left: Elder Dianne Ottereyes-Reid wearing traditional regalia; Right: Niels Jensen and Louise Abbott of Studio Georgeville

**Studio Georgeville teams up with Eeyou artists and artisans to promote Cree traditions**

# Building Bridges

by Joshua Grant
Photos submitted by Louise Abbott

In 2010, Louise Abbott and Niels Jensen published Eeyou Istchee: Land of the Cree. The 252-page photo essay, produced with the help of the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA), focused on life in the bush, living off the land and imparting Cree cultural values to both younger generations and non-Indigenous Canadians.

This vision of preservation and cultural education motivated Abbott and Jensen to stage an Aboriginal arts festival over the Canada Day weekend in Georgeville, an idyllic community on the shores of Lac Memphremagog in Quebec's Eastern Townships. Organized in collaboration with COTA, the Cree Nation Arts and Crafts Association (CNACA) and Studio Georgeville, it featured a two-day film festival, craft demonstrations, and kicked off a month-long Aboriginal women's art exhibition.

"We thought it was important to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action in the domain of culture," said Abbott, who founded Studio Georgeville with her husband Jensen and other members of the Eastern Townships art community in 2008.

"We wanted to bring the work of Aboriginal artists and artisans to a non-Native audience and promote an understanding of Aboriginal life and culture. At the same time, we wanted to give Aboriginal artists and artisans the opportunity to

learn more about life and culture here in the Eastern Townships."

The festival began with a traditional opening ceremony performed by Cree Elder and activist Dianne Ottereyes Reid. The art exhibition featured bark baskets, moose hide, sealskin gloves and other traditional artwork produced by Eeyou Istchee's Ruby Moar and Natasia and Saige Mukash.

When residents of Georgeville and the surrounding area arrived to celebrate Canada Day weekend in the local public park they were greeted by two large teepees where Oujé-Bougoumou's David, Anna and Harold Bosum were giving Cree craft demonstrations.

In one teepee, Anna Bosum taught visitors how to make bannock on a stick and smoked a moose hide while her husband David carved canoe paddles with a crooked knife. In the other, locals chatted with COTA's Victoria Crowe and Robin McGinley about new opportunities for Cree Tourism in Oujé at Nuuhchimi Wiinuu and the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute as Harold Bosum put together tamarack decoys.

Top: David Bosum carves a canoe paddle; Bottom middle: Artwork by Natasia Mukash

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# 3rd Posting

**TITLE:** Bookkeeper

**REPORTS TO:** Executive Director

**SALARY:** In accordance with the Salary Structure established by Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association

**EMPLOYMENT TERMS:** Full-time, permanent position following an evaluation process

**WORK LOCATION:** Ouje-Bougoumou, Quebec

**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION:**
July 22nd, 2016 at 4:30 PM

Contact Person:

Kenny Mianscum
*Executive Director Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association*
205, Opemiska Meskino
Ouje-Bougoumou,
QuebecG0W 3C0

Tel: (418-745-2444 ext.3000 or 3333)

**NATURE OF THE WORK:**

The Bookkeeper is responsible for all tasks related to accounting and finances for Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association, and working in close collaboration, with the Treasurer and with Executive Director of the Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association. Additional administrative duties will be assigned from time-to-time.

Left: Teepees greeted Eastern Townships visitors to Georgeville July 2-3; Right: Anna Bosum working on a pair of moccasins

"We're used to setting up a booth at trade shows in urban centres but we've never offered on-site demonstrations before," said McGinley, COTA's executive director. "We saw it as a way of reaching visitors on a much more personal level.

Abbott says that she and her husband plan to continue to showcase Cree arts and crafts at Studio Georgeville. They hope to obtain more items from CNACA to display at their various exhibitions throughout the year. They also hope to continue to collaborate with COTA on more tourism-related projects.

"Our ultimate goal is to help educate Canadians about Indigenous peoples and their cultural traditions," she concluded. "And in doing so to help Indigenous peoples, in particular the Cree of Eeyou Istchee to retain those traditions."

# The long search

by Jesse Staniforth

## Sisters separated in the 60s Scoop find each other 40 years later

Photos, top left to bottom right: 1. Nakuset; 2. Sonya; 3. Nakuset (left) and Sonya (middle); 4. Nakuset; 5. Rose Mary; Above photograph, Young Sonya Rose



Nakuset, the director of Native Women's Shelter of Montreal (NWSM), is well known for her work to support women's rights, fight racism and raise awareness of First Nations culture for authorities and children in care. Much of the motivation for that work stems from the loss she endured after police in Thompson, Manitoba, took her and her two sisters to separate foster homes in a wave of government abductions of First Nations children now known as the 60s Scoop.

They would know nothing of each other for the rest of their childhood, until Nakuset reunited with her eldest sister, Sonya Murray, while in her 20s.

But there was another child unaccounted for – Rose Mary, known as "Snow White" in the family because of her resemblance to her German father. After her parents split up, the father won custody of her and took the northern Cree girl to Austria, only to leave her there and disappear.

Sonya and Nakuset spent years fruitlessly trying to find her. Until late June of this year, that is, when Sonya received a Facebook message from Rose Mary, who now lives in Horn, Austria.

She lives on a farm with her husband, daughter and 500 pigs and has a thick German accent, Nakuset says. The sisters finally talked with Rose in the first week of July, and Rose plans to visit next summer. Nakuset and Sonya are working on plans to travel to Austria.

The story of their reunion took place over a number of decades and began before they were even separated. Nakuset's birth name, Margaret Murray, came from an early stepfather; John Murray was a wealthy mining surveyor near Flin Flon, Manitoba, who was fond of the girls.

"John Murray took care of us and took us under his wing," Nakuset said. "He had custody of us for a while, but we went back into foster care when he died. He made sure that we got part of his estate."

Nakuset was adopted by a Montreal Jewish family who hid her Native ancestry, telling her she was born in Israel. They told her that Native people were the dregs of society, that they were drug addicts and prostitutes. Today, she does not use her adoptive family's name and did not want it used in this story.

"I don't want to be affiliated with them in any way," she said.

When she turned 21, she became eligible for the money John Murray had placed in trust for her.

"I left home at 18," Nakuset said. "[Her adoptive parents] told me when I was 21 that they thought I was doing really well on my own, not asking them for anything, and they were going to give me some money, I just needed to sign over the estate."

Her adoptive father claimed that John Murray was simply one of his coworkers and that the name on the document was an error – he claimed the money was from him.

"But my extended Jewish family thought this was ridiculous. They told me to get all the records, not just the one I was signing. I had be a detective and look up all the files – and that's where I found Sonya, and all my other siblings. That's how I met my biological family."

Sonya, being older, had seen the trust records and had been sending letters to Nakuset through the trust company. Unfortunately, Nakuset's adoptive parents intercepted and destroyed the letters before Nakuset could learn her sister was attempting to get in touch with her.

"I had no idea Sonya remembered me, because I didn't remember her so much," she said. "I didn't have my Indian status and I didn't know who my mother or my father was. I didn't know anything. These records showed something. The trust company still had the original addresses of my half-siblings, so I wrote to every single one of them and explained who

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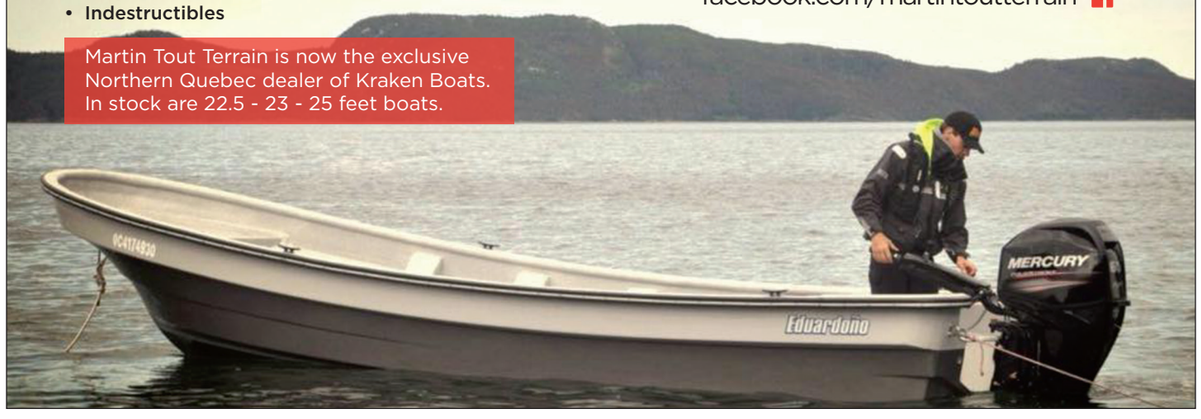


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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

YOUR COMMUNITY,
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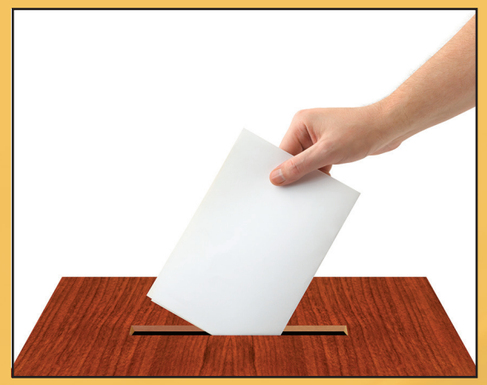

The Cree Health Board will be holding elections for the CHB Chairperson on
**September 6th 2016.**

*Nominations will be open between August 7th to 22nd*

For more information, please contact
**Kenny Loon :** *Chief Returning Officer*
Email: **kennl@rogers.com**
Phone: **(613) 314-0553**

I was, who my mother was, and that I was looking for my Indian status and hoping someone could help me.

"One of my brothers said, 'Oh my god, I used to change your diapers! I totally remember who you are.' That's how I got my Indian status and that's how I got in touch with Sonya."

The worst of it, Nakuset underlined, is that they had an older half-brother who had been looking after them. Responsible and caring, he could have raised the children, she said. But he was Native, and government policy was to place Native youth in non-Indigenous families.

Sonya and Nakuset recently wrote a story about their childhoods and their separation for the magazine Working It Out Together, which will be serialized in seven parts over the coming month. Nakuset doesn't know how she's going to feel when all the details of her difficult upbringing are finally made public. They were gearing up for it when they finally heard from their lost sister.

"So our story is coming out, and Rose gets in touch with us after all this time," Nakuset marvelled.

But the suddenness of it all is also a bit of cause for shock. Talking about it is important. She's brought her story to the media precisely because so few people know about the 60s Scoop and the damage it caused.

"What Sonya writes, it just makes you want to hug your children closer. I can't imagine what she went through. No child should ever feel the way she felt. That's why it's so important that we have these stories out. The 60s Scoop is 20,000 children... They say 85% of the adoptions failed, which means 85% are struggling with addiction and drugs and homelessness. They don't know where they belong. I should be one of those. I don't know why I'm not."

The response to their story has been uniformly positive, Nakuset said. She hopes it helps other abductees find their original family members.

"I know so many Jewish Indians! There are so many in Montreal all adopted through the Scoop. But I think people are kind of shy and they don't think anyone wants to hear. I told my sisters: our message is getting out there and people want to know. Non-Indigenous people are learning and Native people are recognizing their stories."

Department of
Justice and Correctional Services
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If you have any additional questions or need more information, please contact the Correctional Services Regional Office in Val d'or at 819-874-2600 or by email at justice.valdor@cngov.ca.

**www.creejustice.ca**

# Roots & Resistance

by Joel Barde

"For me, **the figures are a way to talk about the fibre**. The fibres for me are more important than the images. **It's all about showing the tree.**"
- Artist Sylvain Rivard

## The **First Peoples Festival** brings first-rate **Aboriginal artists** to Montreal

Summer is the season to relax and enjoy life. One of the best ways to take advantage of the good weather is at Montreal's First Peoples Festival, which from August 3 to 10 will showcase Indigenous culture makers from around the world.

One of the festival's most notable acts is Digging Roots, who will play their soulful blues during a free outdoor show August 4. They won a Juno in 2010 and have since toured widely, recently returning from a third trip to Australia.

"In Australia we met and hung out with so many Indigenous people," explained Raven Kanatakta. "We got to share our teachings with each other. The Indigenous people there have so much in common with us."

Kanatakta grew up in Winneway, an Algonquin community close to Val-d'Or. His wife, ShoShona Kish, is from northern Ontario. "As musicians it's about honouring our voice. We're expressive about where we come from and represent a point-of-view that reflects Anishinaabe, Ojibwe and Mohawk culture," said Kanatakta.

Kanatakta says that Digging Roots' music is a celebration of important "truths" that were demeaned through colonization. "The teachings are about living in harmony among each other," he said.

That thinking is reflected in the group's lyrics, which honour the land and Indigenous people's connection to it. During their shows, they often organize the crowd into a circle, drawing from the powwow tradition, and people dance to the beat of a drum. "It's a unity dance; it brings people together," said Kanatakta.

The music is fun and danceable. Lyrics address universal themes of love and loss but also tackle political subjects, like violence against women and discrimination. For Kish, these aren't theoretical problems – she's experienced them firsthand.

"I was beat up by the police when I was 18, and I've experienced violence. Unfortunately, there are very few of us who haven't. This

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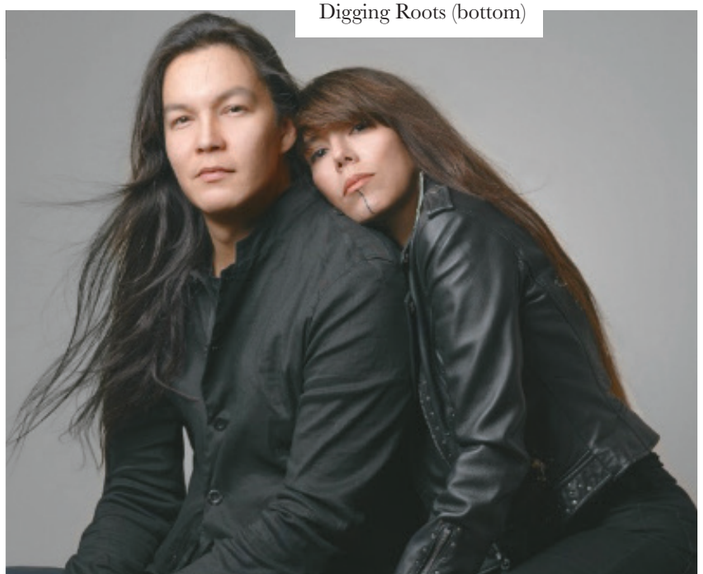
Artists Shauit (top) and Digging Roots (bottom)



is part of the Indigenous experience, and we talk about it through music and song," said Kish.

Though the subject matter of the group's songs can be dark and challenging, their music is decidedly joyful. It delivers a powerful message – that Indigenous people are resilient in the face of systematic oppression.

Being joyful is an "act of resistance and resilience," explained Kish. "I feel like the most powerful act of resistance in my life is to be joyful, even when it's difficult and painful. I don't mean putting on a happy face and smiling and laughing at everything, I mean being honest, and claiming a joyful place to stand and operate from."

Innu reggae and dancehall artist Shauit will also perform. Shauit sings in French and Innu and was featured on Samian's popular track, Les Nomades. As he's grown in popularity and collaborated with politically conscious artists, he's become more thoughtful about his message.

"Before, I talked about mostly personal things and partying. But today I feel like I'm lucky to be heard, and I think it's more important to have a positive and encouraging message. It's important for me to contribute to the betterment of our nation. I try to talk about God, the environment, and love.

Shauit is excited for his August 5 performance. He says the festival an important venue for Indigenous artists to meet and network. He took part in the 2014 edition, which led to a successful collaboration with a Jamaican DJ.

Shauit added that it's important to show non-Indigenous Quebecers modern-day Indigenous culture. "It's a great opportunity for us to show what we can do, and to change people's opinions. It's important for them to have a window into what we're doing."

The festival will also feature the artwork of Sylvain Rivard and his long-time fascination with paper. In his show titled Pulpe Fiction, Rivard will depict figurines of historical and mythological figures he's created using paper.

Rivard said that the look of his work is less important than the material they are created from. "For me, the figures are a way to talk about the fibre. The fibres for me are more important than the images. It's all about showing the tree."

Rivard is also helping organize an exhibit on the importance of the ash tree to Abenaki culture. The tree was once common on the island of Montreal, but an insect infestation decimated the Ash population in recent years.

The tree holds particular significance for the Abenaki people, said Rivard, since their teachings say they descended from the tree.

On August 3 and 7 the Place des Festivals will feature demonstrations on how the ash tree was harvested by Abenaki people. The trees will be soaked and pounded, and then peeled before the bark is woven into baskets. An Indigenous biologist will be on hand to give scientific information on the species. And there will be presentations on its historical significance.

Rivard says he hopes his work will encourage Montrealers to look more closely at their environment. He's saddened by the sight of dead ash trees along Montreal streets. "I'm trying to turn something ugly into something beautiful. I prefer beauty to ugliness. My question is how can I make it beautiful?"

In addition to the music, demonstrations and art shows, the festival will screen films created by Indigenous directors. These films touch on a wide range of subjects, from how Indigenous people are represented in mainstream media to the challenges of getting over a broken heart.

www.presenceautochtone.ca/en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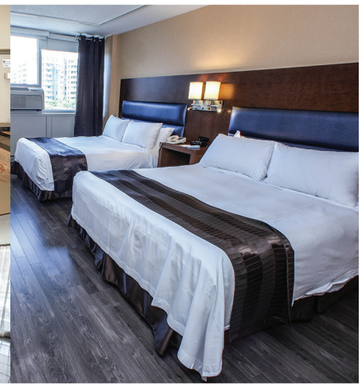
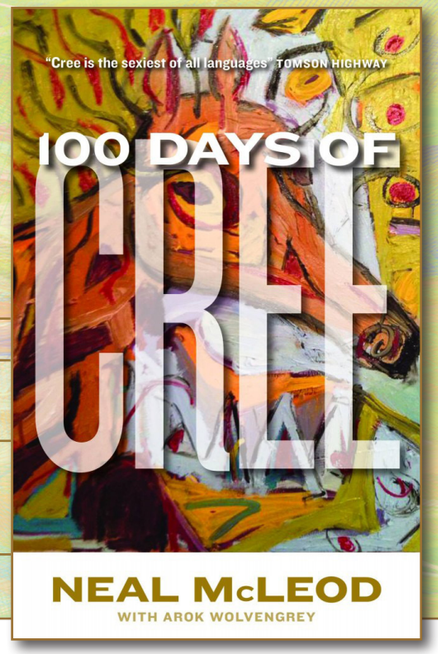


# Ancestral Sound

by Dan Isaac

## Neal McLeod's **newest book explores** the richness of **the Cree language**

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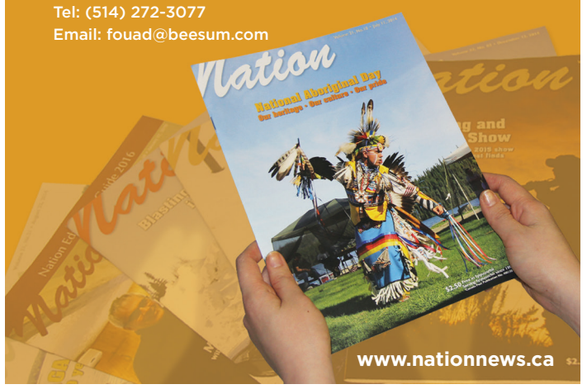


In *100 Days of Cree*, published in June by the University of Regina Press, author Neal McLeod makes a departure from his previous work.

McLeod – poet, painter, "bingo caller" and Indigenous Studies professor at Trent University – previously wrote collections of poems. His newest release centres on preserving, promoting and reinvigorating the Cree language, but he insists the poetry lives within the language.

"We were translating *Pulp Fiction* into Cree and there's a line like 'She's a funky dancer'. The Cree word we used literally translates to 'the way she dances, she knows something you'll never know' – how can you not be a poet when that's your language?"

McLeod believes this artistic "spark" is at the heart of all Indigenous languages. "There's an artist inside every Indigenous person," he suggests.

The inspiration for *100 Days of Cree* came about quite organically. "I was a relative latecomer to Facebook. As soon as I started posting in Cree, people would comment and add layers of meaning to the words," McLeod told the Nation.

McLeod regularly posts words in Cree on Facebook. He sees the use of social media as an imperative in reaching a generation that's "rapidly seeing people with that ancestral knowledge move on to the spirit world."

Another way of reaching out was updating the language for the youth of today. "When I was writing the book, I realized that Cree isn't just a language of the past, it's a language to describe the world around you," said McLeod.

There are days dedicated to Star Wars, KFC, Facebook/Internet slang and Tim Hortons in the book. As you can probably tell by the aforementioned chapter titles, there's a good-natured feeling to the book, and a lot of laugh-out-loud moments.

But the book also serves as a window into an ancestral language, and by virtue of that, their consciousness. McLeod recalls a feeling of communion with the places and people of his ancestral past. "When I first started posting [on Facebook], people would reach out and tell me stories about family and friends who taught me Cree and share words that they never got to tell me."

But the connections to the past go back generations. "Each word is like a piece of a puzzle," said McLeod, recounting a particularly difficult word to translate. "This one Cree band is called Thunderchild after an old chief. The name can actually be translated as a place where a water-being grabbed a thunderbird. The band isn't located anywhere close to this place anymore but their name in Cree is still literally translated as 'the place where that sound exists.'

"The language is like a treasure map... [and if that's the case] then it's every Cree's birthright to recover that ancestral sound," said McLeod.

Reading the book, I discovered the physicality and geography present in the language, but there's an inherent spiritualism to it as well, an encoded animism, a way of looking at the world that I came to see as magic. In modern western discourse, there's a separation of the spiritual and physical. It's an idea McLeod thinks his ancestors would scoff at. "They'd be laughing their heads off at that."

But in reading the book I came to an understanding of how threatening this connection would have been to the colonial agenda, and why the colonial mechanisms tried to sever this connection. If you could spiritually separate the people from their land there'd be less resistance to the exploitation of said lands. In Cree the word used to describe the colonial legacy translates to: when it all went wrong.

"Why do you think it is that so many of us are struggling?" asks McLeod. "We need to reconnect with our ancestral selves."

Even McLeod, who is fluent in his Indigenous language, isn't immune to feeling separated from his ancestral knowledge. He used an anecdote of a summer job in his youth to illustrate the problem.

"One day, we knew German tourists were coming and were told to go out in the field and pitch a teepee. As you know, our German friends have a crazed admiration for neechies' and we didn't want to let them down. We ran out to the field, but once we were there, we all took a deep breath. I asked them all if there was anyone who knew how to pitch a teepee. With the grim realization that we had been worn down by years of colonialism, we all looked to the ground, searching for answers that seemed to elude us."

The story has a happy resolution – a man named Joseph Naytowhow rode in on a horse and helped the boys pitch the teepee. But McLeod recommends for those feeling separated from their ancestral knowledge, to go out and "find your own bannock-making Mr. or Mrs. Miyagi and visit them. We need the youth to go out and visit with these knowledge keepers."

*100 Days of Cree* is very accessible, even for someone like myself who couldn't speak a word of it going in. It provides context and layers of meaning for the Cree language and it inspired me to reconnect with my own Indigenous languages, Mohawk and Mi'kmaq. I'd recommend it to all Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

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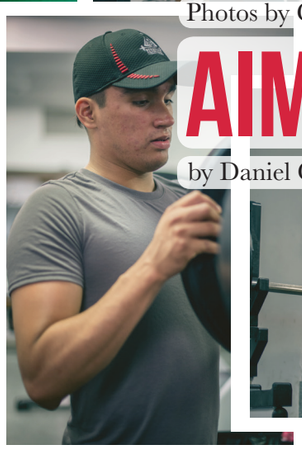
Adam Cheezo (Photo by François Parenteau)

Photos by Catherine Orr

# AIMING FOR A SPOT

by Daniel Coyle



## Cree hopefuls face **high expectations** at Val-d'Or Foreurs training camp

The Cree Nation will be well represented when the Val-d'Or Foreurs open training camp in preparation for the upcoming QMJHL season.

No fewer than three Cree players will be taking part in the club's rookie camp and full training camp in August. They include Wemindji's Linden Namagoose, who was selected by the Foreurs in the seventh round of the QMJHL draft.

The smooth-skating defenseman spent last season with the Rouyn-Noranda Citadelles Midget Espoir squad, tallying six goals, including a pair of power-play markers, to go along with four assists in 32 contests.

That performance caught the attention of Foreurs coach Mario Durocher, who made the journey to scout Namagoose at this year's Dodge Cup in Quebec City. The 16-year-old did not disappoint, scoring a crucial goal in a 3-2 victory over Espoir Saguenay-Lac Jean.

"I had the chance to meet Linden at the provincial championships, and he made a positive impression on me, both as a player and a person," said Durocher in a recent conversation with the Nation.

"He possesses a lot of offensive skill as a defenseman, and has shown maturity leaving home as a young man to play in Rouyn-Noranda, billeting with a family there."

Namagoose is expected to be among 40 hopefuls who will be in attendance at the opening of Foreurs' rookie camp, vying for one of 15 spots still available at Val-d'Or 's full training camp.

While Namagoose has proven his stuff at the Midget Espoir level, he remains far from a lock to open the season with the Foreurs. Several veteran defensemen are returning from a squad that finished with 102 points this past season, second only to archrival Rouyn-Noranda Huskies.

That likely means a stint with the AAA Amos Forestiers in the upcoming season, where Namagoose can expect plenty of playing time, and work further on skills development.

"Linden will have his chance at training camp," Durocher said. "But if he wants to play hockey at a high level, he will have to get bigger, and stronger."

Listed at 6'2" and 160 pound on the Ligue Midget AAA website, Namagoose is slightly built for the rugged play at the major junior level.

Those numbers are changing rapidly, says Trevor Monaghan, who manages the Chisasibi Fitness Center, and is working closely with Namagoose on an off-season training program that looks to be paying immediate dividends.

Aided by elite Cree athletes like Deverick Ottereyes, a QMJHL veteran who spent three seasons with the Charlottetown Islanders and Gatineau Olympiques, Monaghan has Namagoose on a six-day-per-week program that not only focuses on improving physical conditioning, but includes a personal development element.

"Our goal is to help create a structured and progressive environment for young Cree athletes to develop life skills, a sound training background and goal-oriented progress," said Monaghan. "Linden is solid physically, but he needs to gain some muscle mass, and develop some mental toughness. If he can gain 10 pounds over the summer and also add strength, it will really help his chances of cracking the roster in Val-d'Or this year."

Nagamoose is not the only Cree hockey player looking to make their mark with the Foreurs next winter.

Waswanipi's Silas Mattawashish will be aiming to crack the Val-d'Or lineup as a regular after seeing action in just two games this past season.

The left-shooting forward enjoyed a solid campaign with the Forestiers, amassing 29 points in 45 regular-season outings, and was a standout for the club in this year's Dodge Cup, scoring two goals and three assists in five games.

Mattawashish is spending the summer working alongside Namagoose in the Chisasibi Fitness Centre's Elite Strength and Conditioning Program, and will be faced with high expectations upon his arrival next month at the Foreurs training camp.

An emphatic "oh yes" was Durocher's response to questions about Mattawashish's chances of earning a spot in Val-d'Or this fall.

"Silas is a smart, hard-working, two-way hockey player," added Durocher. "He is the kind of player I enjoy having in training camp, and he is going to have a good chance at this year's camp."

Adam Cheezo rounds out the trio of Cree hockey hopefuls looking to land a job with the Foreurs.

The 17-year-old out of Eastmain overcame a serious knee injury during his QMJHL rookie campaign to appear in 28 regular-season contests with Val-d'Or, netting one goal and a pair of assists before being held pointless in two playoff matchups.

Cheezo's low offensive production during his injury-plagued season does not worry Durocher, who sees his offensive upside, but will be looking for him to improve on his defensive responsibilities this winter.

"He is a heck of a hockey player with great hands that remind me of (former Montreal Canadien) John Chabot, " said Durocher. "But he will need to continue to work on off-ice training to avoid further injuries, and develop his defensive game to lock up his place on the team."

Val-d'Or Foreurs training camp kicks off August 17 when rookies report, with the club's pre-season schedule kicking off at Centre Air Creebec August 19 against the Huskies.

The regular season gets underway September 23, when the Foreurs look to avenge their first-round playoff series loss to Boisbriand-Blainville, hosting the Armada in the first match of a three-game home stand.

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Cooking

# Putting new sizzle on your grilling game

With our short summer season, we have little time to improve our grilling skills to impress friends and family. New techniques to flavour your favourite meats can be found in *Weber's New American Barbecue*, by Jamie Purviance, puts a modern spin on the classics.

The collection of recipes features beautiful photos and offers new takes on hamburgers, lamb and steak. Try out these recipes and see for yourself!

By Amy German

# BARBECUING BLISS

Gastropub Lamb Burgers

**Excerpted from Weber's New American Barbecue 2016 by Jamie Purviance. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.**

# TRIPLE BEER BURGERS

**SERVES:** 4 | **PREP TIME:** 20 MINUTES, PLUS ABOUT 20 MINUTES FOR THE SAUCE
**GRILLING TIME:** 24 TO 31 MINUTES
**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** LARGE DISPOSABLE FOIL PAN

*One of the secrets of making especially juicy burgers is adding a little beer to the raw meat. If you use too much, the patties get too wet to develop a good crust and they tend to fall apart, but just a little full-bodied beer helps in a big way.*

1. In a saucepan over medium heat on the stove, saute the garlic in 1 tablespoon oil until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the ketchup, 1/2 cup of the beer, the vinegar, brown sugar, 2 teaspoons of the Worcestershire sauce, and 1/2 teaspoon salt and bring to a gentle boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the sauce is the consistency of ketchup, 15 to 20 minutes, stirring often. Let cool.
2. Prepare the grill for direct cooking over medium-high heat (400° to 500°F).
3. Brush the onion with oil, and then grill over direct medium-high heat, with the lid closed, until lightly charred, about 6 minutes, turning once. In a large disposable foil pan mix 1/2 cup of the beer, the mustard, and 1 teaspoon salt. Add the onions to the beer mixture. Grill over direct medium-high heat, with the lid closed, until most of the liquid is evaporated and the onion is soft, 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from the grill.
4. Mix the ground chuck, paprika, pepper, 1 1/2 teaspoons salt, the remaining 2 tablespoons beer and 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce, and then gently form four patties of equal size, each about 3/4 inch thick. With your thumb or the back of a spoon, make a shallow indentation about 1 inch wide in the center of the patties to prevent them from forming a dome as they cook.
5. Grill the patties over direct medium-high heat, with the lid closed, until cooked to medium doneness (160°F), 8 to 10 minutes, turning once. During the last 30 seconds to 1 minute of grilling time, toast the rolls, cut side down, over direct heat.
6. Build each burger on a roll with lettuce, a patty, onions, and sauce. Serve warm.

- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons IPA or dark ale, divided
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
- 3 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce, divided
- Kosher salt
- 1 medium yellow onion, cut crosswise into 1/3-inch slices
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 1/2 pounds ground chuck (80% lean)
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 4 pretzel rolls, split
- 4 leaves Boston lettuce

Triple Beer Burgers

# GASTROPUB LAMB BURGERS

**SERVES:** 4 | **PREP TIME:** 20 MINUTES
**GRILLING TIME:** 7 TO 9 MINUTES
**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** 2 LARGE

- 1 1/4 pounds ground lamb, preferably from the shoulder
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh Italian parsley leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

TAPENADE
- 1/2 cup pitted mild green olives, such as Picholine, drained
- 1/2 cup pitted brine-cured black olives, such as Kalamata, drained
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red or white wine vinegar
- Finely grated zest of 1 orange
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 4 brioche buns, split
- 8 slices ripe tomato, each about ¼ inch thick

*These burgers strut with a little upscale swagger on account of ground lamb, a mixed olive tapenade with gourmet oomph, and big slabs of summer's best tomatoes. The brioche bun adds another elegant element, but any rich, eggy bread, such as challah, would be great.*

1. *Combine the lamb, garlic, parsley, oregano, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Mix well, and then gently form four patties of equal size, each about 3/4 inch thick. With your thumb or the back of a spoon, make a shallow indentation about 1 inch wide in the center of the patties to prevent them from forming a dome as they cook. Refrigerate the patties until ready to grill.*
2. *In a food processor combine the tapenade ingredients. Pulse on and off until minced and well blended, scraping down the inside of the bowl several times.*
3. *Prepare the grill for direct cooking over medium-high heat (400° to 500°F).*
4. *Lightly season the patties on both sides with salt and pepper, and then grill over direct medium-high heat, with the lid closed, until cooked to medium doneness (160°F), 7 to 9 minutes, turning once. During the last 30 seconds to 1 minute of grilling time, toast the buns, cut side down, over direct heat. Remove from the grill and let the patties rest for 2 to 3 minutes.*
5. *Build each burger on a bun with a patty, tapenade, and tomato slices. Serve warm.*

# COWBOY STEAKS WITH SMOKED SHALLOT BUTTER

**SERVES:** 4 TO 6 | **PREP TIME:** 15 MINUTES
**GRILLING TIME:** ABOUT 1 HOUR
**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** 2 LARGE HANDFULS MESQUITE WOOD CHIPS, SMALL DISPOSABLE FOIL PAN

*To make manly carnivores sing for joy like Maria prancing through the Alps in The Sound of Music, serve them marbled bone-in rib eye steaks (aka cowboy steaks) that come with their own handles. The handles are not really for picking up the steaks, but the bones do protect and flavor the meat alongside it, making those parts often the juiciest and tastiest of all. Season these thick steaks well and let them stand at room temperature long enough so that the salt can draw out moisture and the meat can reabsorb those juices with the seasonings. That usually takes 30 to 40 minutes.*

Cowboy Steak

BUTTER
- 1 shallot, about 1 ounce, peeled and cut lengthwise into quarters
- 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ cup (½ stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh
- Italian parsley leaves
- 2 teaspoons dry sherry (optional)
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 bone-in rib eye cowboy steaks, each about 2 pounds and 2 inches thick
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder

1. Soak the wood chips in water for at least 30 minutes.
2. Prepare the grill for direct and indirect cooking over medium-high heat (about 450°F).
3. In a small disposable foil pan combine the shallot quarters, oil, and paprika. Drain and add one handful of the wood chips to the charcoal or to the smoker box of a gas grill, following manufacturer's instructions, and close the lid. When smoke appears, place the foil pan with the shallot over indirect medium-high heat, close the lid, and cook until the shallot is tender, about 40 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and let cool for 10 minutes. Mince the shallot, transfer to a small bowl, and add the remaining butter ingredients, including ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper, mixing thoroughly. Refrigerate, covered, until firm. Remove from the refrigerator about 10 minutes before serving.
4. Lightly brush both sides of the steaks with oil and season evenly with 2 teaspoons salt, ½ teaspoon pepper, and the garlic powder. Allow the steaks to stand at room temperature for 30 to 40 minutes before grilling.
5. Drain and add the remaining wood chips to the charcoal or smoker box. When smoke appears, sear the steaks over direct medium-high heat, with the lid closed, for 6 to 8 minutes, turning once. Then move the steaks over indirect medium-high heat, close the lid, and continue cooking to your desired doneness, 12 to 14 minutes more for medium rare. Remove from the grill and let rest for 3 to 5 minutes. Serve warm, topped with the butter.

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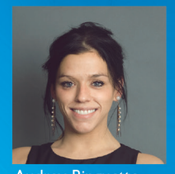
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# At the **beach**

by Sonny Orr

Rez Notes

I washed off the magnificent speckled trout and got it ready to gut. It was caught earlier this year and spent some time in the deep freeze before I got around to making a nice meal out of it. Slitting open its soft underbelly, a rather large stomach made this fish a little more interesting. Nestled in its stretched stomach was another speckled trout, this one a mere panfry. I noted that perhaps using a much larger lure might get these monsters to bite my hook.

I quartered the fish and boiled it. Facebook helps passing the time and before long the fish is magically cooked. Out come the expensive blueberries from the fridge and the deliciously slick rendered bear fat. Yes, I'm making sigamoon, an extremely popular fish-and-berry salad.

After the delicacy there is an extreme need to escape from a house that used a stove in 28-degree weather. So we pile into the pickup and head down to the beach. The strong winds wick off any sweat and the dry warmth turns everyone into mermaids. The tiny cove – conveniently shallow for the young ones – is just right as the tide was going out. The beach is serenely relaxing with no one mentioning the ice still floating out on the Hudson Bay.

Days like this are a rare event. Just enough heat and wind to keep persistent black flies, mosquitoes and horseflies away from delicate child skin. No loud blaring music here, just a beautiful summer day that begs for a dip in the cool waters of the Great Whale River. I'm sure you'll find hundreds of similar scenes across the north of families dipping their toes in lakes and rivers and perhaps even in the Arctic Ocean for a few brave souls.

Last year, we were hit with a heat wave that scorched the earth. Nearly everyone found refuge in the cool winds that come off the waters. Children and adults were frolicking about and then, suddenly, someone pointed to the river. Nothing… then it popped out again… a seal swimming up river.

The screams from frightened parents as they called the kids back to shore. Dunn dunnn, dunn dunn, the Jaws theme popped into my head. Heck, aren't seals the friendly ones? Aren't they eaten by sharks? Don't we eat them too? But no, the seal disappeared and swam off. I'm just glad we don't have any real sharks around here. We probably netted them into extinction millennia ago and had to settle for seal liver (my personal favourite) instead of shark-fin soup. Perhaps climate change might, by chance, sway giant white sharks to venture into our salted bays.

Sharks aren't the problem up here, it's the killer whales that just might mistake you for a slow swimming seal, their favourite food. Nothing like human flesh to spice up your diet when the orca is concerned. Humans come in different flavours, and recently, poutine-flavoured people are just beginning to catch on in the predator world. After all, what's left to eat out there that isn't contaminated or disturbed by the world's human problems. If I were an educated orca, I wouldn't question the validity of such reasoning,

This is really one of the reasons I like the north, the edible fish that abound in nearly every lake, river and creek. It really is a fisher's paradise. No sharks to make it interesting, but I'm happy biting into my fish instead of it chopping me in half after I land it on shore or in my tiny canoe.

The beach is a great place in the summer, when the wind is right and enough clouds to help prevent skin cancer. The sand in between my toes, the kids screaming, the total relaxation …

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UTNS

Under the Northern Sky

# Remembering to be grateful

by Xavier Kataquapit

I was lucky. Raised in a large family by my mom Susan and dad Marius, my eight siblings and I were always well cared for and guided. Life was not very easy for any of us living in Attawapiskat 20 or 30 years ago. There was poverty, poor housing, substandard health and education services, and rampant alcohol and drug abuse. Sadly, too many of these issues still hurt my people.

I always felt fortunate that mom and dad ran an organized household. We had great food to eat, we were warm in good homes that were well cared for, we were supported in our education and from an early age we were taught the value of working hard. Although my mom now suffers from debilitating arthritis, when I was young she was spry and always managed to make the time to prepare meals, keep our home and lives organized, and motivate us to be the best we could be. She and dad believed in education and pushed us to go to school. They instilled us with spiritual values and taught us to be kind, open and understanding.

My dad was a go-getter from an early age and believed that success was due to hard work. He was a traditional man who knew the James Bay and coast very well. As a young man he spent many months out on the land hunting, trapping and fishing to feed and support his family.

Happily, mom had much useful training from her Elders and parents and teachers. For a few years she worked in the kitchen at our hospital. That turned out to be a very good thing for our large family as she could put together a nutritious and great tasting meal quickly. I loved her lasagna and spaghetti, which she made often with moose or caribou meat. Every Friday we dined on platters of fresh-battered fried fish.

In the summer we collected mostly gooseberries and mom magically turned them into wonderful jam that we had with our bannock. She also baked gooseberry pies. Mom always made sure we had enough and taught us how to prepare good meals for ourselves.

Dad was a dreamer, always planning his next big project. He was a successful entrepreneur who developed all sorts of businesses, including transportation, construction, and food and hotel services. Although he has passed, some of my siblings continue to manage businesses he started. We all learned from an early age that we needed to contribute to the success of his businesses. This taught us the importance of work and we learned many skills to help us through life.

I recall those days of hard work with my siblings hauling freight, running a fast-food restaurant, working construction or collecting firewood. It was hard work all year and we had to deal with freezing temperatures or black flies and mosquitoes. Mom was always our back-up. When we got home tired and hungry she was there with a great meal. The house was warm and cozy and our beds ready for a good night's sleep.

Because of our parents we had an easier life. Although I later had to deal with alcoholism and addictions I was fortunate to have had teachings early in life on making good choices. I believe this made me more open to realizing I had a problem and reaching out for help.

More and more these days I realize how important my parents were in helping me survive and have a life. I have also had a lot of guidance and help from good friends and other family members. I try my best to remember to be grateful for the good life I have today and that fact that I am living clean and sober. Recently, I visited with my mom and enjoyed some quality time with her. We like to just sit and chat. We reminisce a lot and she passes along many stories and teachings. When I am with her I am reminded of how much she gave to me, my dad and my siblings. She reminds me to be grateful.

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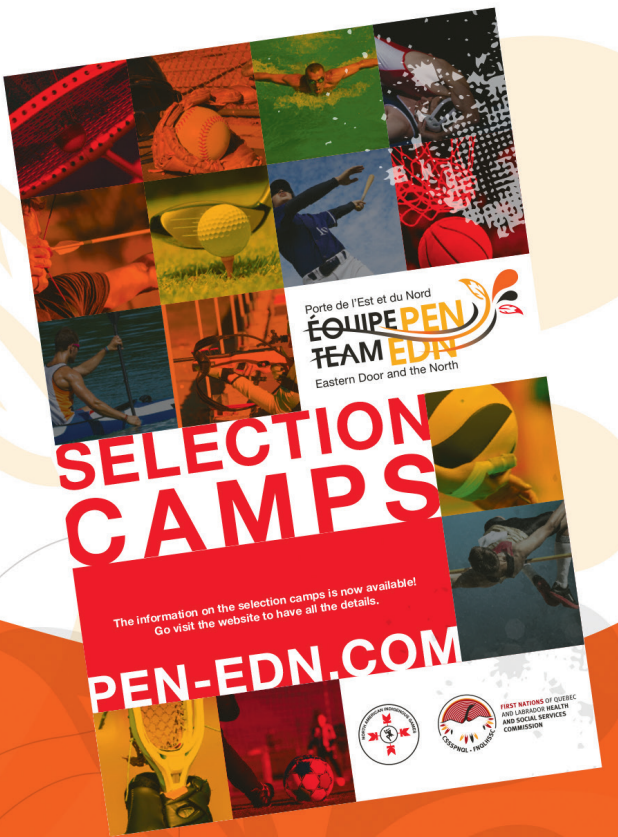
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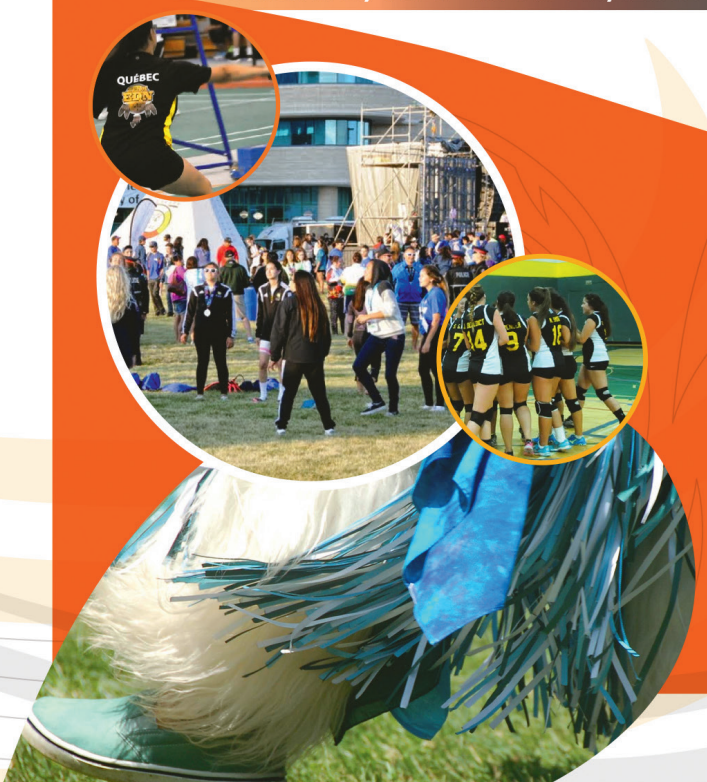


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